



Coalition

Scimitar

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The Reconstruction in Review



Cpl Dave Liddle/RLC

Pte Dave Marshall of the British Army 23 Pioneer Regiment is mobbed by children as he distributes gifts at a school in Umm Qasar.



Photo by Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves, Jr.

Senior Master Sgt. Tommie Tracey, 101st Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, treats an infant's bedsores at a medical clinic in Swabe Village near Baghdad International Airport.

As the year 2003 drew to a close, the staff of the Coalition Scimitar reflected on some of the most significant events and images of the year.

From January through March, world leaders built a Coalition of nations committed to removing the threat of Saddam Hussein.

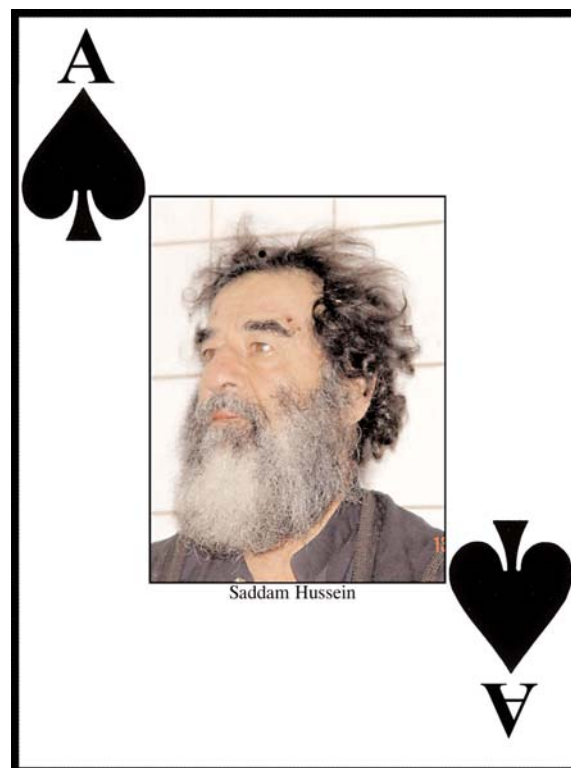
Diplomatic effort was the first choice to resolve this conflict but it quickly became apparent that route was not going to work. Saddam Hussein continued to back out of agreements and failed to abide with U.N. Security Resolutions.

Hundreds of thousands of troops were poised for combat operations against Saddam Hussein's army, combined with humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people, should diplomatic efforts fail. Combat operations began March 19. By May 1, President George W. Bush declared an end to major combat operations and the rebuilding began.

Coalition forces throughout Iraq focused on obtaining security – identifying and removing anti-Coalition terrorists – and helping the Iraqi people rebuild their nation free from oppression.

Great strides have been made in both those goals. Troops continue to weed out terrorists and find hidden caches of weapons. While terrorist attacks continue, the number has decreased dramatically.

More and more Iraqis are free to pursue their goals and dreams without the fear. Images from the past year are the best way to tell the story.



May

After President George W. Bush declared an end to major combat operations in Iraq, the reconstruction of the war-torn country began. Still, the Coalition forces didn't rest. Operation Iraqi Freedom refocused on helping Iraqis build a new country based on democracy.

The prevalence of poverty awed troops flowing into the country. Iraqis—women, men and children—thanked Coalition forces for freeing them from Saddam's nearly 30-year reign of tyranny.

But work wasn't done.

Coalition forces set out to provide a stable, safe, peaceful and prosperous country. The Shiites of Iraq, oppressed by Saddam, were able to practice their own traditions for the first time in three generations.

The seeds of democracy took root. Town councils and local politician began to meet and select leaders to guide the reconstruction.

The efforts of Coalition troops brought water and electricity to residents in part of the country who had never had a steady supply of either.

Businesses budded as shops opened and people went about their lives. Coalition forces began to round up more than 100,000 criminals Saddam had freed from prisons.

Troops began the effort to remove hundreds of tons of weapons from schools, neighborhoods and houses of worship.

The Coalition secured oil wells to protect the country's wealth. Even though a predicted humanitarian crisis didn't materialize, challenges remained. Troops help distribute food, water and medicines. Spain, the Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania all made substantial contributions to the stabilization and reconstruction.

Improvements could be seen daily in health care, electricity and water. Children returned to schools.

Troops uncovered mass graves, evidence of Saddam's brutality against his own people.

The number of Iraqi police back on the streets in cities across Iraq increase each day.



Photo by Sgt. Tyrone Walker/319th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

A U.S. Army soldier catches a nap with basic essentials after pulling guard duty near the Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Facility.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Nathan Alan Heusdens

Children play at the amusement park in Karbala City. The amusement park was recently cleaned up and put back in working order by United States Marines with Weapons Company 3rd Battalion 7th Marines.



Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Jacob Johnson/U.S. Navy
Spc. Danny Lemieux of the 142nd Engineer Battalion makes a picnic table for a school in Baghdad as part of Task Force Neighborhood.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Nathan Alan Heusdens/U.S. Marine Corps
Above: U.S. Navy personnel with 3rd Battalion 7th Marines load medical supplies onto vehicles in order to deliver them to the Hospital of Karbala in Karbala City.



Photo by Sgt. Jeremiah Lancaster/U.S. Army
A steelworker from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 welds angle iron roller-bearing stops to the steel foundation of a Mabey-Johnson bridge in Sarabadi. The stops prevent the roller-bearings from sliding off the foundation when the bridge is launched. The Seabees are building the Mabey-Johnson over a larger concrete bridge that was destroyed during the war.



Photo by Lance Cpl. Nathan Alan Heusdens/U.S. Marine Corps
Sadai Faiham and Azhar Awaid keep record of the names of the employees voting during the first democratic election in Karbala to decide who will hold the position of the Head of Water Administer in the lobby of the Water Administer building in Karbala.

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June

Combined Joint Task Force 7 launched Operation Desert Scorpion in an effort to isolate and defeat remaining pockets of resistance seeking to delay the transition to a peaceful and stable Iraq.

This operation, which follows Operation Peninsula Strike, was designed to identify and defeat selected Ba'ath party loyalists, terrorist organizations and criminal elements while delivering humanitarian aid simultaneously.

The units involved were the 101st Air Assault Division, located in northern Iraq, the 3rd Air Cavalry Regiment in western, the 1st Armored Division in Baghdad, the 4th Infantry Division located in eastern Iraq and The 3rd Infantry Division located in eastern Iraq.

Confiscated weapons include AK-47s, hand grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns, pistols and rifles and thousands of ammunition. The division also confiscated \$9,463,000 in U.S. dollars, 1,557,000,000 in Iraqi Dinars, 1,071 bars of gold and 52 vehicles.

Humanitarian missions were also part of Operation Desert Scorpion.

In the north, units helped to facilitate payment of civil workers and establish a police training academy. In Baghdad, units helped repair roads and pipelines. In the central regions, units continue to escort humanitarian fuel convoys throughout the area of operation.

Coalition forces continued sewage and garbage removal. Iraqi citizens and the Coalition worked together to grade soccer fields and replace soccer goal nets.

For a local school, they rebuilt 20 desks, installed lights and painted parts of the school. Vaccinations were also given to students who were not up to date on vaccinations.

Approximately 200-250 immunizations were given to children in Karbala as part of the first National Immunization Day since the war began.

Civil Affairs Battalions distributed thousands of gallons of potable water to residents.

Coalition forces completed well repairs in towns that had never had their own water source.

Troops delivered diesel and performed preventive maintenance on generators. They delivered Humanitarian Daily Rations to residents. The Coalition delivered basic school supplies to schools and distributed potable water to the cities.

Troops assisted in the restoration of clean water to the towns of Al Janabai and Al Qaqaa providing water to more than 2,200 families. They also aided in plumbing repairs and construction of new fences at an elementary school and middle school.

Coalition forces launched Operation Sidewinder June 29 — third in a series of operations focused on rooting out various subversive elements attempting to undermine Coalition efforts to restore basic infrastructure and stability in Iraq as Operation Desert Scorpion came to a close.



Photo by Staff Sgt. William Armstrong/U.S. Army

Sgt. 1st Class John Hague of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), shows a member of the Facility Protection Security Force how to properly hold an SKS Russian-made rifle.



Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines/U.S. Army

An Iraqi Policeman leads a class through riot control methods taught during a Police Academy held by the 3rd Military Police Company, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), in Falluja.



Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines/U.S. Army

Sgt. 1st Class Terry Ford with the 3rd Military Police Company demonstrates riot control methods to recruits at the Police Academy in Fallujah



Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines/U.S. Army

Soldiers man the hose as another controls the flow to fill a family's water barrel at a water distribution point established by the soldiers from 1-9th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), in Kandari, a village near Fallujah.



Photo by Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves Jr./U.S. Air Force

Airmen with the 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron's Fire Department wash an arrival sign during the preparations for re-opening Baghdad International Airport June 24.



Photo by Spc. Derek Gaines/ U.S. Army

U.S. Army Spc. James Raine, 3rd Infantry Division, guides an Iraqi SA-3 Goa missile slated for destruction onto a flatbed truck after the missile was discovered outside of Fallujah.



Photo By Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves Jr/U.S. Air Force

Soldiers of A Battery 1st Battalion 377th Field Artillery (Air Assault), a unit attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), load a cache of explosives for transport to a Ammunition Supply Point for destruction.

July

Coalition forces continued emphasis on Iraqi Police Force organization and training throughout the cities of Iraq to counter localized stealing, intimidation, black market activity and subversive behaviour. Troops continued to provide law enforcement training classes to produce professional police officers.

As the rebuilding of Iraq continued, so did the daily missions of supply distribution throughout the country.

Civil Affairs units delivered medical supplies to health clinics. Engineers worked on improvements to hospitals' electrical and water chlorination systems.

Troops also trained female prison guards at a juvenile correctional facility to allow female family members to visit prisoners.

During Operation Sidewinder, conducted by the 4th Infantry Division, which concluded July 5, nearly 300 individuals were detained and a variety of weapons were seized.

The Combined Joint Task Force-Seven

Beanies for Baghdad Program delivered more than 7,000 Beanie Babies and more than 1,000 school supply items to local neighborhoods, hospitals children's ward, dental care units, communities rebuilding projects, and community children centers.

New police stations opened. Progressing towards Iraqi citizens establishing their own government, advisory councils selected members.

Soldiers delivered and installed air con-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Wastler/U.S. Army

Army Capt. O'Toole and Army Sgt. 1st Class Dawn Byrnes examine the remains of victims found at a mass gravesite near Mosul. O'Toole and Byrnes are part of a team of pathologists who are in Iraq to gather evidence for possible war crimes trials.

ditioning units, shelving units, waiting room chairs, toilets and washbasins, a safe and a refrigerator to clinics.

Thirty tons of medical supplies were delivered to Mosul.

Information provided by alert citizens

and the quick work of Iraqi police helped Coalition forces avoid two possible attacks.

Facility Protection Service Guards graduated. Guards will work at oil and gas facilities and hospitals.

August



Photo by Staff Sgt. Lee A Osberry Jr./U.S. Air

Pfc. Troy Tarazon, a medical technician with Task Force 163, immunizes a young Iraqi girl in Kirkuk. In an effort to support local communities, Coalition forces assisted doctors during the nation's monthly immunization day.

The month of August was filled with significant triumphs for Coalition forces. Shortly after the capture of Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay in late July, the fighting forces went on to make great strides in the rebuilding of the country.

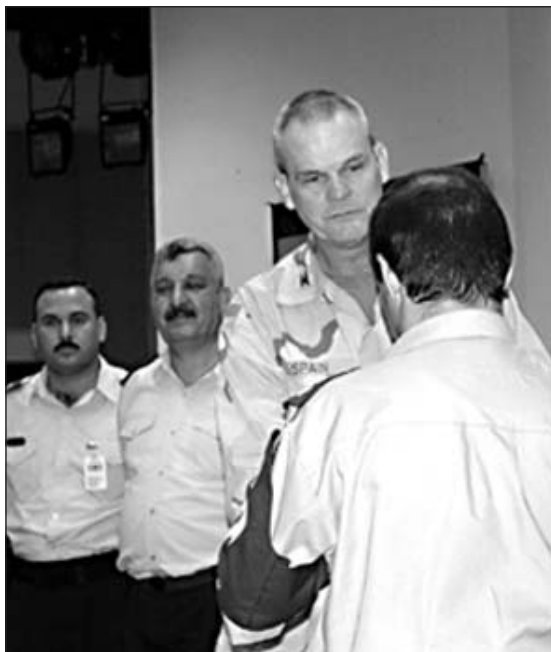
Significantly, the Coalition began to get cooperation from the Iraqi people that was needed to help put a stop to attacks against the Coalition and the Iraqi people. In several instances possible attacks were prevented as Coalition forces disrupted rocket-propelled grenade attacks, discovered improvised explosive devices and located large weapons caches throughout Iraq.

Coalition forces and the Iraqi Police continued to work together to seize illegal weapons and ammunition, as well as dangerous contraband, ensuring the streets of Iraq become safer.

There were also — and still continue to be — a number of raids and mission operations conducted in various places throughout the country to find the remaining members of the Saddam regime.

One such operation was Operation Ivy Lightening, conducted by the 4th Infantry Division and Taskforce Ironhorse soldiers. Two precision raids were launched which were the fifth in a series of operations focused on neutralizing paramilitary, former regime loyalists and other subversive elements within Iraq. The operation was a surgical strike in the remote towns of Ain Lalin and Quara Tapa, located along the Jabal Hamrin Ridge, to isolate and capture non-compliant forces and former regime loyalists who are planning attacks against Coalition forces.

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Spc. Kristopher Joseph

18th Military Police Brigade Commander Col. Teddy R. Spain presents one of 20 Iraqi policemen certificates of achievement at the Baghdad Convention Center to honor those who went above and beyond the call of duty since MP and IP began working together in post-regime Iraq.



Photo by Staff Sgt. John Barton/U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Moises Velasco, a Medical Technician with the 332 Air Expeditionary Wing, displays to his Italian counterparts the procedure for securing a litter during a multi-national air evacuation training exercise at Tallil Air Base.



Photo by Paul A'Barrow/Royal Navy

Basra International Airport is put on a high security alert because of a suspected I.E.D.(Improvised Explosive Device) in a vehicle, which had been placed at the main check point leading into the airport. The alarm was raised when a member of the Royal Air Force Regiment spotted the car. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team was called into action and dealt with the car by planting a small explosive charge on the vehicle.

Spc. Robert O. Martin, a civil affairs specialist with the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, an Army Reserve unit from Riverdale, Md., helps unload a truck at a food distribution warehouse in Baghdad.



Sgt. Mark S. Rickert/372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Photo by Pfc. Chris Jones/ 40th Public Affairs Detachment

A soldier looks at a poster of Saddam Hussein found in the barracks on a suspected terrorist training camp during a raid by several infantry units within the 101st Airborne Division.

AUGUST
Continued from Page 7

Central American allies and other international militaries also began to lend a helping hand in Coalition efforts. Joining the Coalition were El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic and Italian forces.

On the humanitarian front, the Coalition reached out in a number of heartwarming ways to increase the quality of life for the Iraqi people.

Numerous donations were made to include food, fire trucks, generators, school supplies, clothing and other much needed supplies. Child immunizations were also done to help protect local communities from diseases.

Operation Great Giving, launched by Combined Joint Task Force-7, allowed donated goods from Americans to reach the hands of Iraqis.

September



Photo by Sgt. Tyrone Walker/319th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Pfc. Najielynda Superiano, an instructor with 1st Armored Division, teaches an Iraqi woman how to fire an AK rifle. Superiano and other female soldiers taught the short course to women interested in working as force protectors with men at public facilities around Baghdad. In the two-day course at the Baghdad Forum, American soldiers taught Iraqi women to fire assault rifles, detain suspected criminals and search cars for bombs. In all, about two dozen women graduated.

September launched with the need for Iraqis to take responsibility in guarding their own country.

To aid in this process, Coalition forces increased training for Iraqi security units like the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, the border guard, the new Iraqi army, and the oil-pipeline police. Some 55,000 to 60,000 Iraqis now work with Coalition forces, and the full intent is for these groups to gain the authority of Iraq's security once the country is on its feet.

Also, training for the Facility Protection Security Forces was well underway. Significantly for the country, women were allowed to become a part of the force. The purpose of the FPSF is to supplement the Iraqi Police Force in and around Iraq by patrolling the streets and standing guard at infrastructure facilities.

Coalition forces turned over responsibility of the force to the Iraqis during a formal change of responsibility ceremony.

Sept. 11 ceremonies were held all over Iraq to remember the lives lost in the tragedy two years ago.

The rest and recuperation leave program was also implemented for service-members and Defense Department civilians on 12-month orders in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 15-day leave program started out allowing 270 people a day to travel home, and then increased significantly to around 800 people a day.



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Bennett/367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Brig. Gen. John F. Kelly, Maj. Gen. Andrzej Tuskiewicz and Spanish Brig. Gen. Alfredo Cardona formalize the transfer of authority from 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment to the Plus Ultra Spanish Brigade Sept. 23 in An Najaf. The Marines, who came to Iraq last January, were the last U.S. battalion remaining in southern Iraq. The bulk of the Spanish Brigade is composed of troops from Honduras and El Salvador.



Photo by Sgt. Robert Woodward/101st Airborne Division

Sgt. 1st Class Erin Gustafson, senior instructor of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, gives marksmanship pointers to new recruits who will work with Coalition forces and one day protect their own country.

Soldiers with the 223rd Military Intelligence and 308th Civil Affairs Battalions hang a banner at a reopening ceremony of the Al-Khedera School in the village of Abu-Hassan. Members of the 223rd and 308th were instrumental in renovating the school.



Photo by Sgt. Jack Morse



Photo by Staff Sgt. David Bennett

Pvt. Manuel de Jesus Herrera, a rifleman with Battalion Cuscatlan of El Salvador, keeps watch during a patrol outside the village of Mishkhab near An Najaf. The battalion along with another battalion from Honduras make up part of the Spanish Brigade that now carries out operations in the Najaf province.



Photo by Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves Jr.

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgts. Sally Davis and Beth Roe prepare to fold the U.S. flag during a retreat ceremony held here to commemorate the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. The men and women of the 447th Air Expeditionary Group are deployed to Baghdad International Airport, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

October



Photo by Sgt. Tyrone Walker/319th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The first battalion of the new Iraqi Army graduated during a ceremony in early October in Kirkush after nine weeks of intensive training. The first class of 700 soldiers comprise a light-motorized infantry battalion that will assist 4th Infantry Division in border security operations.

Sailors and guests join in cutting the cake during the Navy's 228th birthday celebration held at the Coalition Provisional Authority chapel Oct. 13. Among the guests were senior civilian administrator Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and Chief Michael Day who was the oldest sailor present.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Houghton



Photo by Sgt. Jack Morse

Maj. Tom Eccles, (left) a doctor with the 205th Military Intelligence Brigade, examines an Iraqi boy at a school near Balad, Iraq in October as part of a routine Medical Capabilities (MedCap) mission.

During the month of October, the Coalition and the Iraqi people continued making giant leaps toward the re-establishment of the country. Healthcare, an aspect of daily life that was severely neglected under the Hussein regime, was given a boost when nearly \$50,000 was allocated to refurbish the Avgani Primary Health and Al Zumar Health Care Centers in Mosul. The institutes now provide a variety of medical services for more than 125,000 citizens.

The Iraqi Central bank opened its doors to usher in a new phase for the people and economy of the country. Beginning Oct. 15 citizens were able to exchange old Dinars, bearing the face of Saddam Hussein, for newly designed and minted ones. Currency is one of the most obvious and important elements of any government. The new bills reflect the way that Iraq continues to evolve and move toward establishing a free and democratic government. Task Force Ironhorse Soldiers participated in making this change by providing security as the new money was transported to government banks.

Another chapter in Iraq's history began as the first battalion of the new Iraqi Army proudly marched across a Kirkush parade field. They are the first of many Iraqi citizens who are helping to pave the way toward peace and stability in their country by serving in its new, all-volunteer military. Those troops are currently assisting other Coalition forces in protecting and securing their country.

Infrastructure improvements continued as the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) assisted the Al Suliamanyia University computer science and engineering departments in the development of communications network using over 10 kilometers of donated fiber optic cable.



Photo by Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves, Jr./U.S. Air Force

Senior Civilian Administrator L. Paul Bremer speaks to a crowd of women at the Heartland of Iraq's Women's Conference at the University of Babylon in Hilla. The four-day event was hosted by the Women for a Free Iraq organization and sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.



Photo by Pfc. Chris Jones/ 40th PAD

A mother comforts her sick child in the children's ward at the Sinjar General Hospital. On the same day the hospital held a grand opening for the child care center, the first clinic north of Mosul responsible solely for children.



Photo by Spec. Patricia Lage

A Rasheed bank employee exchanges Iraqi dinar for a customer in Mosul. The new exchange program began Oct. 15 and is scheduled to continue through Jan. 14.



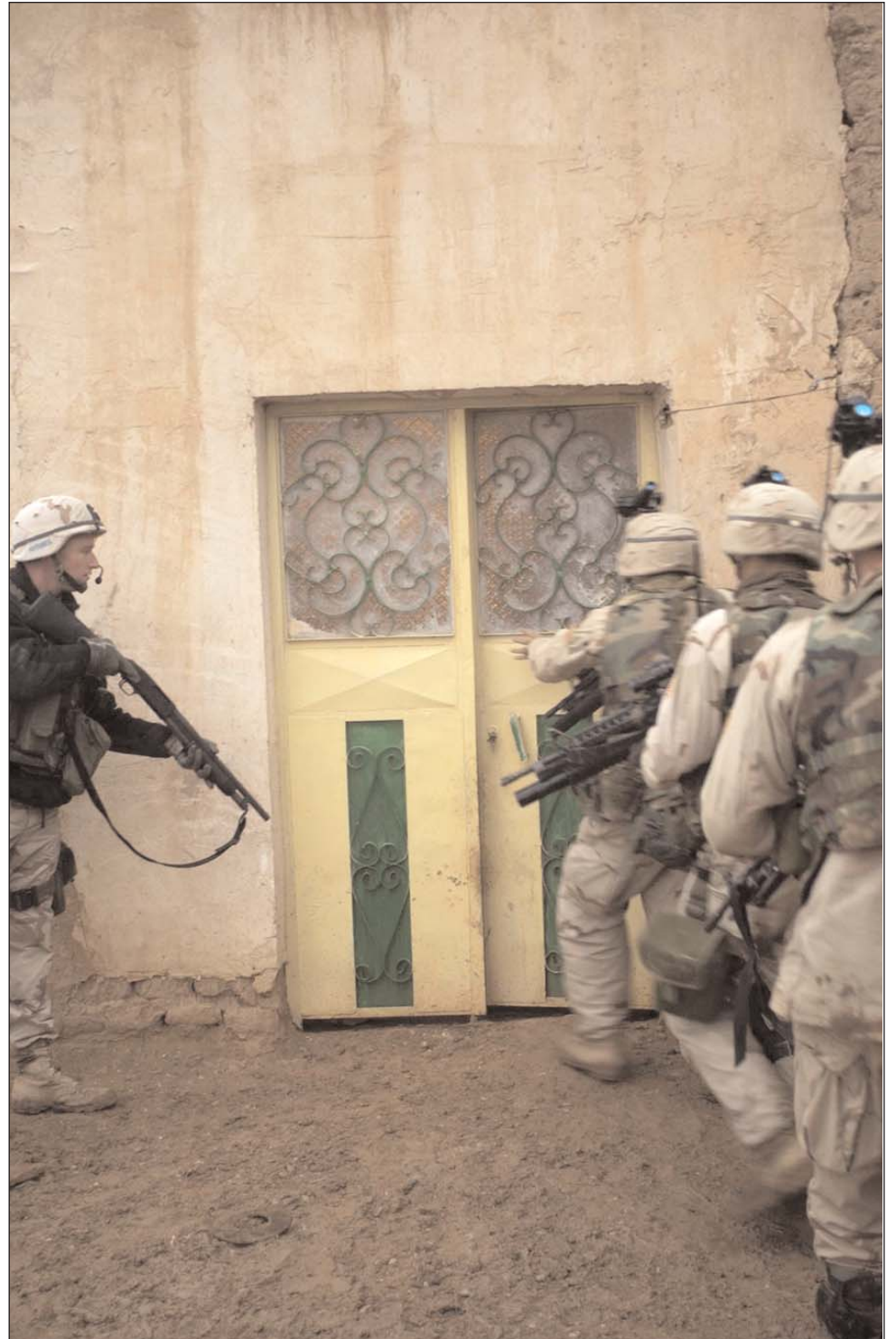
Photo by Staff Sgt. Reynaldo Ramon/U.S. Air Force

President George W. Bush paid a surprise Thanksgiving Day visit to the Baghdad International Airport's Bob Hope Dining Facility so he could have dinner with deployed troops, Nov. 27.



Spc. Rockwell Amez, a medic with the 4th Infantry Division, examines a young patient during a medical assistance mission in a village near Balad. The 308th Civil Affairs Brigade, out of Homewood, Ill., facilitates the missions, which involve doctors, medics and translators, every Sunday in the Balad area.

November



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Clinton Tarzia/U.S. Army

Soldiers of 1st Battalion (Airborne), 508th Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade conduct a cordon and search mission in the village of Pir Ahmad seeking former regime loyalists, foreign fighters and arms and ammunition used against coalition forces and Iraqi civilians in November. The 173rd Airborne Brigade is under the operational control of the 4th Infantry Division.

November brought more than rain to the region. It brought more goodwill projects and an historic visit to Iraq by the President of the United States.

In a step closer to national sovereignty, transfer of authority for the Jamilla Power Station to the Ministry of Electricity was just one example of the huge steps being made by the Coalition and Iraqi union.

While insurgent attacks continued during the month, the number dropped dramatically after the start of Operation Iron Hammer. Enemy attacks against the Coalition in and around Baghdad have dropped by 70 percent since Operation Iron Hammer began Nov. 12, the commander of the 1st Armored Division said.

Army Brig. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey told reporters in Baghdad and the Pentagon press corps here by video teleconference that information gathered over several weeks -- mainly from Iraqi citizens -- and pattern analysis of enemy actions have combined to make Iron Hammer "an intelligence-

based, precise combat operation."

The general said Iron Hammer is a joint operation involving the Army, the Air Force and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and police.

That kind of progress is being made throughout Iraq. In one day, soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division in the Baathist Triangle of Baghdad, Ramadi and Tikrit confiscated a huge stock of weapons. Included in their catch were 17 AK-47 assault rifles, 11 other rifles, one pistol, three rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 53 grenades, six containers of artillery propellant, 60 120 mm and 250 60 mm mortar rounds, 50 blasting caps, 10 blocks of C-4 explosive, 10 sticks of TNT, 50 mortar fuses, and 40 spools of wire used to detonate improvised explosive devices.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld listed the rebuilding accomplishments in Iraq. All the hospitals and 95 percent of the clinics are open. More power is being generated than in pre-war days. About 2.1 million barrels of oil are flowing from

Iraqi wells for home consumption and for export earnings.

The Iraqi courts are running, there are 170 free newspapers, and the education system has 5.1 million Iraqi children back in school, with 97,000 young Iraqi men and women applying for college.

Several hundred Baghdad-area residents arrived early in the morning Nov. 13 to begin what could be a career as an Iraqi police officer.

Residents spent hours waiting patiently in line at the Iraqi Forum during an initial application process, run by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division. Applicants ranged from young 20-year old adults looking for their first job to seasoned Iraqi army veterans.

From a brief physical examination to random security background checks, soldiers scrutinized application forms, checked for diabetes and held several other stations to ensure the best 500 applicants would be submitted for possible selection into the police academy.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pearsall/U.S. Air Force

Florida Army National Guardsmen open presents from elementary school children. The presents were brought by Florida Representative Mario Diaz-Balart to Baghdad.



Photo by Sgt. Matthew Siemion/U.S. Army

Chief Warrant Officer Glenn Avery and Warrant Officer Carrie McLeish, both with the 501st Signal Company of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) work on wire connections to a new server for the Science Museum in the Nineveh Province in Mosul. The 501st Signal Company helped the Mosul Science Museum get new computers, servers, a satellite dish and internet access to improve their education in the sciences. The 501st has played an important role in communications during their deployment.

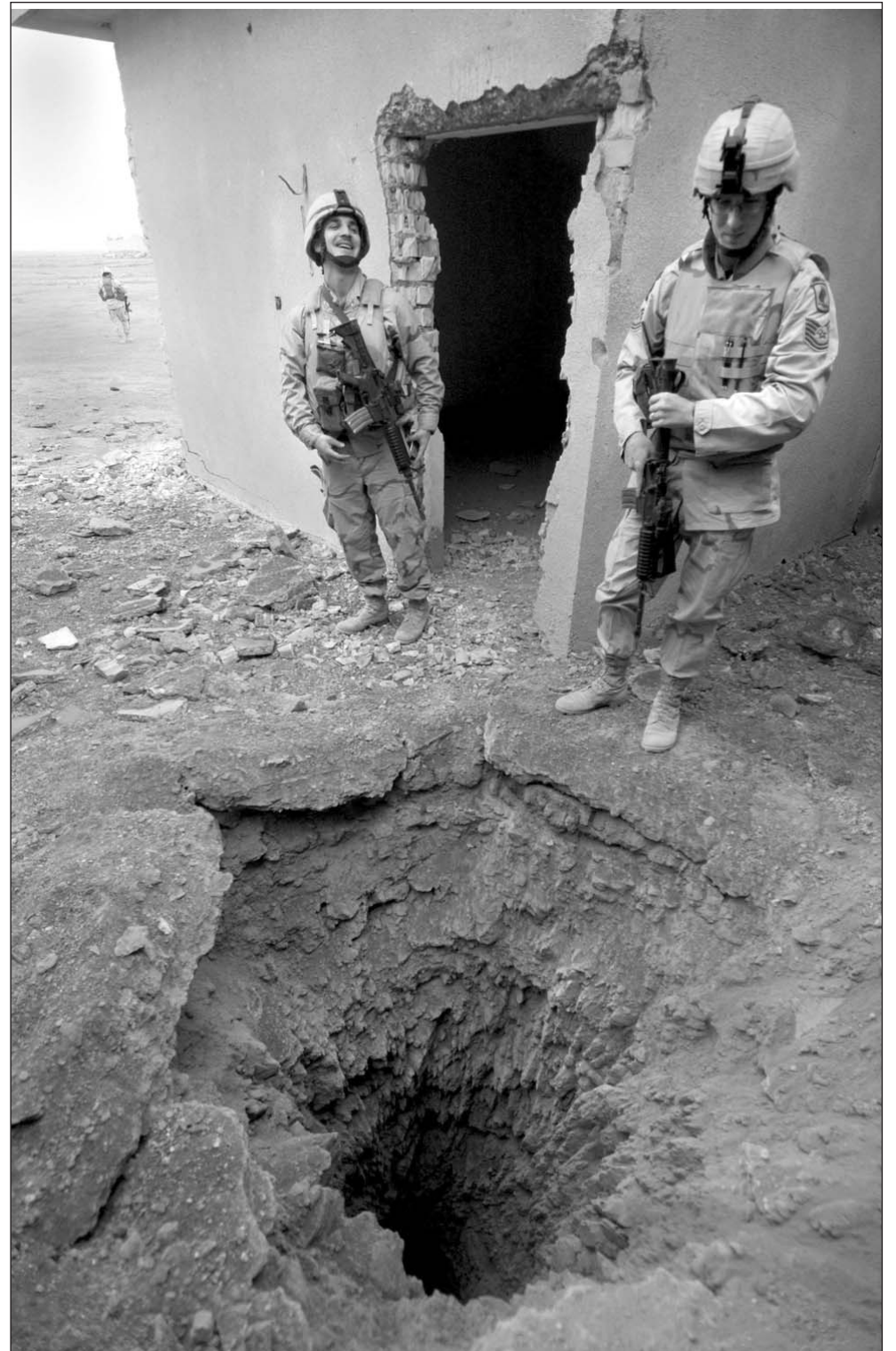


Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe/USAF

Tech. Sgt. Ryan Knight and Senior Airman Josh Gianni, Tactical Air Control Party, 4th Air Support Group, Detachment 1, examine the crater left by a coalition air strike on what was believed to be an enemy firing position on the outskirts of Kirkuk as part of Operation Ivy Cyclone II, a combined-arms operation designed to root out and crush insurgents.



Iraqi members of the Police Support Unit celebrate with a Royal Military Police instructor their graduation from training in November.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Houghton/U.S. Air Force

Two Iraqi students wait outside their classroom at the Al-Fayha Primary School in the Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad. The U.S. Army's 490th Civil Affairs Battalion headed efforts to refurbish the school after looters gutted the entire building during the major combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 490th CA Bn acquired \$46,000 in Commander's Emergency Relief Program funds, negotiated costs and hired local Iraqi contractors to do the work. The 490th CA Bn has been assisting Baghdad neighborhoods with a variety of community improvements during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

December



Photo by: Airman 1st Class Alicia M. Sarkkinen/USAF

Capt. Stanley Paregien and Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gary Garvey, both from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group at Kirkuk Air Base, play guitar and sing

songs for happy children at an all-girls' school in downtown Kirkuk. Churches and schools from across the United States donated more than 150

boxes of toys and school supplies to the Kirkuk AB chapel staff to be given to the children.

A time for sharing, caring

As the year closed out, troops from all Coalition forces and Iraqis alike rejoiced in the news that Saddam Hussein had been captured. The announcement officially came during a press conference Dec. 14 when Coalition Provisional Authority Ambassador L. Paul Bremmer said those now-famous words, "Ladies and Gentlemen, we got him."

Saddam Hussein was taken into custody at a small mud-walled compound outside the village of Adwar at 8:30 p.m. Dec. 13 by soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division. Following the announcement, more Iraqi citizens came forward with information to help stop the anti-Coalition attacks.

Early in the month, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld outlined the conditions to be met for the Coalition to achieve its goals in Iraq: Iraqi self-governance, responsibility

for its own internal security and a growing economy that encourages people "to come back to the country rather than leave."

Also during the month, Coalition troops from Italy seized a large cache of munitions in southern Iraq. Schoolchildren in England donated shoes to schoolchildren here.

The holiday season brought presents, cards, USO-sponsored entertainment and other diversions from the realities of war.

As the month and the year closed, U.S. servicemembers received recognition for their sacrifices and contributions to the War on Terrorism. Time Magazine chose the American Armed Forces for their annual "Person of the Year."

Gracing the cover of their magazine is the image of three soldiers from the 1st Armored Division.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeffrey A. Wolfe/U.S. Air Force

(Left) At a hospital in Kirkuk, U.S. Army Maj. Ben Starnes, 250th Forward Surgical Team, and Iraqi Doctor Nadim Ibrahim jointly diagnose an Iraqi man.



Soldiers from 1st Armored Division get ready for a mission in December.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Verlin Levi Collins/USAF

U.S. and Australian troops brought their own seats to the World Wrestling Entertainment Smackdown show at Camp Victory in Baghdad. Shows for the troops during the holiday season included comedians Robin Williams and David Letterman and the 1st Armored Division band. The troupes traveled throughout the region to entertain the troops far from home.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams/USAF

The time on his watch reads 3:33 p.m. as Senior Master Sgt. Eugene LaDoucer, 506th Air Expeditionary Group, Kirkuk Air Base watches Lt. Gen. Richardo Sanchez detail Saddam Hussein's capture.

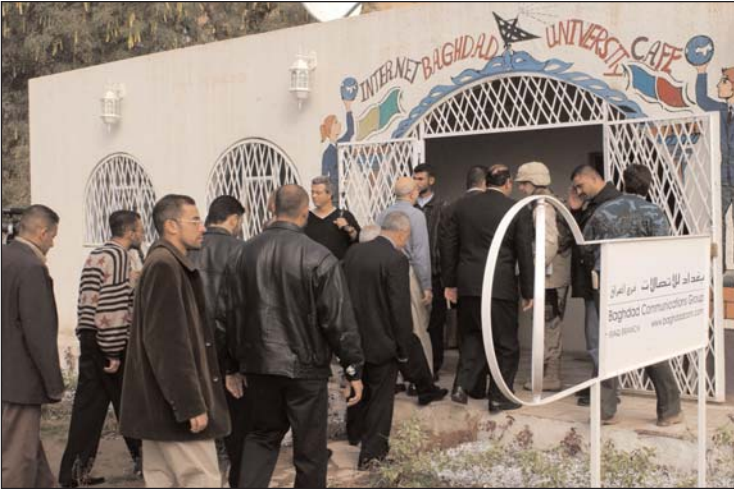


Photo by Tech. Sgt. John Houghton/USAF

Guests, faculty and Iraqi students tour the new facilities at a ceremony celebrating the re-opening of the Baghdad University Museum and Internet Cafe. The museum and internet cafe were rebuilt using \$40,000 of the Commander's Emergency Relief Program funds from the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Verlin Levi Collins/USAF

A soldier waits for a departure flight from Baghdad International Airport. Some troops rotated home just in time for the holidays while thousands celebrated in Iraq.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Saria/U.S. Army

Santa Claus visits the troops of Forward Operating Base Speicher along with the 4th Infantry Division Band during a Christmas show.

... And
Happy
New
Year
*May the new
year bring
peace and
prosperity*